WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A coating composition, comprising:

a latex polymer; and

a coalescent having the formula:

$$R^1\text{-}(C(O)\text{-}X_r\text{-}O)_n\text{-}R^2$$

wherein:

R^1 is an organic group;

X is a divalent organic group;

r is 0 to 1;

n is 1 to 10; and

R^2 is hydrogen or an organic group;

with the proviso that R^1 includes at least three carbon atoms when X is not $-(CH_2)_s-$ wherein s is 2 to 8;

with the proviso that the coalescent has less than two aliphatic unsaturated carbon-carbon bonds when r is zero;

wherein the coalescent has a volatile organic content of less than about 50% and is dispersible in the coating composition.

2. The coating composition of claim 1 wherein the coalescent does not phase separate from the coating composition upon standing at 49°C for four weeks.

3. The coating composition of claim 1 wherein the coalescent does not include aliphatic unsaturated carbon-carbon bonds when r is zero.

4. The coating composition of claim 1 wherein the coalescent does not include aliphatic unsaturated carbon-carbon bonds.

5. The coating composition of claim 1, wherein r is one.

6. The coating composition of claim 1, wherein the coalescent facilitates the formation of polymer films of the latex polymer at a temperature of less than about 25°C.

7. The coating composition of claim 1, wherein the coalescent facilitates the formation of polymer films of the latex polymer at a temperature of about 4°C to about 10°C.

8. The coating composition of claim 1, wherein the coalescent facilitates the formation of polymer films of the latex polymer at a temperature of about 4°C to about 5°C.

9. The coating composition of claim 1, wherein the coalescent has a volatile organic content of less than about 30%.

10. The coating composition of claim 1, wherein the coalescent has a volatile organic content of less than about 20%.

11. The coating composition of claim 1, wherein the coalescent has a volatile organic content of less than about 15%.

12. The coating composition of claim 1, wherein the coalescent has a number average molecular weight of no greater than about 750.

13. The coating composition of claim 1, wherein the coalescent has a number average molecular weight of less than about 500.

14. The coating composition of claim 1, which is in the form of a paint.

15. The coating composition of claim 1, wherein n is 1 to 5.

16. The coating composition of claim 1, wherein n is 1 to 3.

17. The coating composition of claim 1, wherein n is 2 to 3.

18. The coating composition of claim 1, wherein R^1 is an organic group having less than 100 carbon atoms.

19. The coating composition of claim 1, wherein R^1 is an organic group having substituents selected from the group of oxygen atoms, carbonyl groups, hydroxyl groups, and combinations thereof.

20. The coating composition of claim 1, wherein R^1 is an organic group having 3 to 24 carbon atoms and substituents selected from the group of oxygen atoms, carbonyl groups, hydroxyl groups, and combinations thereof; and wherein R^2 is hydrogen.

21. The coating composition of claim 1, wherein R^1 has the formula R^3-$(CH_2)_m$-$(O(CH_2)_p)_q$- wherein R^3 is an alkyl or aryl group, m is 0 to 24, p is 1 to 4, and q is 0 to 50.

22. The coating composition of claim 14, wherein p is 1 to 2.

23. The coating composition of claim 14, wherein m + pq is less than about 23.

24. The coating composition of claim 1, wherein R^2 is hydrogen or an organic group having less than 100 carbon atoms.

25. The coating composition of claim 1, wherein X is a divalent organic group having 2 to 8 carbon atoms.

26. The coating composition of claim 1, wherein X is a divalent organic group having 3 to 5 carbon atoms.

27. The coating composition of claim 1, wherein X is an organic group having substituents selected from the group of oxygen atoms, carbonyl groups, and combinations thereof.

28. The coating composition of claim 1, wherein X has the formula $-(CH_2)_s-$, wherein s is 2 to 8.

29. A coating composition, comprising:

a latex polymer; and

a coalescent having the formula:

$$R^1-(C(O)-X_r-O)_n-R^2$$

wherein:

R^1 is an organic group;

X is a divalent organic group;

r is 0 to 1;

n is 1 to 10; and

R^2 is hydrogen or an organic group;

with the proviso that R^1 includes at least three carbon atoms when X is not $-(CH_2)_s-$ wherein s is 2 to 8;

with the proviso that the coalescent does not includes aliphatic unsaturated carbon-carbon bonds;

with the proviso that r is one when R^2 is hydrogen;

wherein the coalescent has a volatile organic content of less than about 50%, is dispersible in the coating composition, and facilitates the formation of polymer films of the latex polymer at a temperature of less than about 25°C.

30. The coating composition of claim 29, wherein the coalescent facilitates the formation of polymer films of the latex polymer at a temperature of about 4°C to about 10°C.

31. The coating composition of claim 29, wherein the coalescent facilitates the formation of polymer films of the latex polymer at a temperature of about 4°C to about 5°C.

32. A coating composition, comprising:

a latex polymer; and

a coalescent having the formula:

$$R^1\text{-}(C(O)\text{-}X_r\text{-}O)_n\text{-}R^2$$

wherein:

R^1 has the formula $R^3\text{-}(CH_2)_m\text{-}(O(CH_2)_p)_q\text{-}$ wherein R^3 is an alkyl or aryl group, m is 0 to 24, p is 1 to 4, and q is 0 to 50;

X has the formula $\text{-}(CH_2)_s\text{-}$, wherein s is 2 to 8;

r is 0 to 1;

n is 1 to 10; and

R^2 is hydrogen or R^1;

wherein the coalescent has a volatile organic content of less than about 50%, is dispersible in the coating composition, and facilitates the formation of polymer films of the latex polymer at a temperature of less than about 25°C.

33. A coating composition, comprising:

a latex polymer; and

a coalescent having the formula:

$$R^1\text{-}(C(O)\text{-}X\text{-}O)_n\text{-}H$$

wherein:

R^1 is a hydrocarbyl moiety or an organic group containing substituents selected from the group of nonperoxidic oxygen atoms, hydroxyl groups, and combinations thereof;

X is a divalent hydrocarbyl moiety or an organic group containing nonperoxidic oxygen atoms and carbonyl groups; and

n is 1 to 10;

wherein the coalescent has a volatile organic content of less than about 50% and is dispersible in the coating composition.

34. The coating composition of claim 33, wherein the coalescent has a volatile organic content of less than about 30%.

35. A coating composition, comprising:

a latex polymer; and

a coalescent having the formula:

$$R^1\text{-}(C(O)\text{-}X\text{-}O)_n\text{-}H$$

wherein:

R^1 is a hydrocarbyl moiety or an organic group containing substituents selected from the group of nonperoxidic oxygen atoms, hydroxyl groups, and combinations thereof;

X has the formula $-(CH_2)_s-$, wherein s is 2 to 8; and

n is 1 to 10;

wherein the coalescent has a volatile organic content of less than about 50% and is dispersible in the coating composition.

36. The coating composition of claim 35 wherein s is 3 to 5.

37. The coating composition of claim 30, wherein the coalescent has a volatile organic content of less than about 30%.

38. A coating composition, comprising:

a latex polymer; and

a coalescent having the formula:

$$R^1\text{-}(C(O)\text{-}X\text{-}O)_n\text{-}H$$

wherein:

R^1 is a hydrocarbyl moiety or an organic group containing nonperoxidic oxygens;

X is an organic group containing nonperoxidic oxygens and carbonyl groups; and

n is 1 to 10;

wherein the coalescent has a volatile organic content of less than about 50% and is dispersible in the coating composition.

39. The coating composition of claim 38, wherein the coalescent has a volatile organic content of less than about 30%.

40. The coating composition of claim 1, which has been coated onto a substrate and dried.

41. The coating composition of claim 29, which has been coated onto a substrate and dried.

42. The coating composition of claim 32, which has been coated onto a substrate and dried.

43. The coating composition of claim 33, which has been coated onto a substrate and dried.

44. The coating composition of claim 35, which has been coated onto a substrate and dried.

45. The coating composition of claim 38, which has been coated onto a substrate and dried.